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# HONORING THE LIFE, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF MINNIE MINOSO TO AMERICAN BASEBALL

## HON. STEVE COHEN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 19, 2015*

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor a great baseball player and human being who passed away on March 1, 2015, Saturnino Orestes Armas Arrieta who was better known as Minnie Minoso, the Cuban Comet and Mr. White Sox.

Minnie Minoso was born November 29, 1925 in Cuba. He played baseball there and had the opportunity to play baseball here in the U.S. in the Negro Leagues, for, being a Black Cuban, he wasn't allowed to play in the Major Leagues. He played three years with the New York Cubans and then because of Bill Veeck, who was one of the leaders in integrating baseball—the American League's Branch Rickey, Minoso had the opportunity to play in the Major Leagues. He was originally signed to the Cleveland Indians but was traded to the Chicago White Sox in 1951, where, because of his unlimited exuberance and effort, he became known as the "Cuban Comet."

Minoso was a great White Sox player, one of the greatest players of the 1950s and a great emissary of Latin American baseball players. He was the first Black Latin American player and superstar, the first black White Sox player and the third American League player of African descent.

Minnie Minoso had a great career. He did everything in baseball. He hit for average, he hit for power, he had speed, he was a great fielder, and a great competitor. In his career, Minoso batted .300 eight times, had a career batting average of .298 with 1023 RBIs and hit 186 home runs. He was a seven-time major league All-Star, a three-time Gold Glove Award winner and was one of only two players to play in the Major Leagues for five decades. In 1990, the White Sox wanted him to play in his sixth decade, which would have placed him in a league of his own. At the time, I placed a call to MLB Commissioner Fay Vincent and argued for Minnie being allowed to play in just one game and accordingly have six decades under his belt. Unfortunately Commissioner Vincent respectfully declined.

In addition to Minnie being one of the greatest baseball players of the 1950s, he was simply a great human being. In 1955, I lived in Memphis, Tennessee and was recovering from childhood polio. I went to an exhibition baseball game at Russwood Park where the White Sox were playing the Cardinals. I had a White Sox cap kind of like this one—this is a Minnie Minoso cap—and I had a White Sox t-shirt. I was on crutches and getting autographs when a player came and gave me a baseball. I went to my dad and told him about it; we went down to thank the player. He was a white pitcher for the Cardinals named Tom Poholsky. He said, "Don't thank me. Thank that player over there." That was number nine

for the White Sox, Minnie Minoso. In the entire baseball field of 50 players or more, one cared about a young boy with polio who was a White Sox fan and wanted to do something for him. But in segregated Memphis, a black player didn't feel comfortable doing that, so he did it through a white player. The experience taught me at a very early age about the horrors of discrimination, prejudice and racism.

After that, Minnie became my friend. I visited him in Chicago and went into the White Sox locker room where he gave me his bat and cap. When he came to Memphis in 1960, I visited him at the Lorraine Motel, which was where the black players stayed while the white players were at the Peabody—another lesson in discrimination that taught me well and has taught me to this day to be vigilant against all forms of racism and discrimination. The Lorraine was where Dr. King was killed and now is a great Civil Rights museum in Memphis.

I followed Minnie my whole life. He was like a part of my family. We moved to Los Angeles and we went and visited him at Chavez Ravine. He came up to my dad, and he said "Doc, how's the kid's leg, how's he doing?" He always was concerned.

Minnie was denied one of his life's goals of being voted into the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum. I tried to help him with that. Baseball made a mistake; they should have put Minnie in the Hall of Fame for his Sporting News Rookie of the Year season in 1951 and for all his great years on the diamond where he was unquestionably one of the premiere players of the game through 1961, in addition to being the first Black Latin American Major Leaguer and the first Latin American star. While he was not afforded this honor during his lifetime, Minoso's achievements were recognized through his induction into the Cuban Baseball Hall of Fame in 1983, the Hispanic Heritage Baseball Hall of Fame in 2002, the Latino Baseball Hall of Fame in 2010, and having had his number nine retired by the White Sox, his statue placed at U.S. Cellular Field as he was "Mr. White Sox," and over 35 years of being the White Sox ambassador to Chicago. It is my hope that Minnie will soon be inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum as it needs Minnie to remember this groundbreaking and popular diamond star.

Minnie Minoso died Sunday, March 1, 2015. Visitation was Friday, March 6th at Holy Family Church in Chicago and the funeral was that Saturday. I'll miss Minnie Minoso. He is a lesson in why sports are bigger than runs, hits and errors. It is about human beings and humanity and young kids. Thank you, Minnie. Yours was a life well-lived.

## HONORING FRANK DEAN

## HON. JARED HUFFMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 19, 2015*

Mr. HUFFMAN. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to recognize Frank Dean who will be retiring from the National Park Service after nearly forty years of dedicated service. Since 1976 when he first joined the National Park Service as a Ranger at Alcatraz Island, Frank Dean has remained committed to preserving the natural beauty and strong cultural heritage of America's National Parks for this and future generations.

Over the past four decades, Mr. Dean has served the American public at parks across the United States, and he will retire in March 2015 as the General Superintendent of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). Since 2009, Frank Dean has taken on the monumental task of managing the GGNRA, which is the nation's largest urban park and is currently visited by an estimated twenty million people each year. As General Superintendent, Mr. Dean has been responsible for overseeing a staff of nearly three hundred federal employees and tens of thousands of volunteers, in partnership with over twenty-five affiliated nonprofit and commercial organizations. Frank Dean's ability to balance the diverse and competing interests of those who enjoy the park has allowed the GGNRA to continue to flourish and expand its appeal while keeping pace with America's changing demographics.

Under Mr. Dean's visionary leadership, world-class art has been incorporated to enhance the park through unique installations, such as Mark di Suvero at Crissy Field and @Large: Ai Weiwei on Alcatraz Island. Frank Dean has pursued the park service's proud tradition of providing youth engagement and educational opportunities through the Park Youth Collaborative. He has overseen critical improvements of park land, notably the restoration of natural ecosystems at Muir Beach to benefit endangered Coho salmon populations. Frank Dean also played a leading role in forging the Tamalpais Lands Collaborative, a groundbreaking five-way partnership to secure a better future for Mt. Tamalpais.

Frank Dean's effective leadership has benefited all who enjoy the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. While he may be retiring from the National Park Service, his outstanding commitment to our parks will continue as Mr. Dean works to preserve and protect Yosemite National Park as the new President and CEO at Yosemite Conservancy. Please join me in recognizing Frank Dean and expressing deep appreciation to him for his long and impressive career, and exceptional record of service to our great nation.

## IN RECOGNITION OF THE SUPER STATE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SCHOLASTIC STATE CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

## HON. JUAN VARGAS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 19, 2015*

Mr. VARGAS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the members of the Southwest High School Chess Club for their outstanding achievement in winning First Place at the 2015 Super States Southern California Scholastic State Chess Championship for the K-12 Under 1200 rating section. This championship offers students across the state an opportunity to showcase their chess skills through friendly competition.

I would like to recognize the Southwest High School Chess Club for providing instructors, equipment and curricula to after-school programs. These programs are designed to promote problem-solving, higher-level thinking